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NORTH POLK

FEBRUARY 2024

Living

MAGAZINE

Golden EMPLOYEES

**Retirement-age workers share why
they continue to report for duty**

A passion for native plants

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Mini Greek yogurt pancakes with cinnamon-maple topping

RECIPE

Girls wrestling debut: Middle schoolers "blazing a trail"

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3. **Forward-Facing Harness Seats:** Transition to a forward-facing harness seat with a five-point harness once your child outgrows the rear-facing seat. Make sure the harness is snug and positioned at or slightly above the child's shoulders.
4. **Booster Seats:** Use a booster seat for older children who have outgrown the forward-facing seat. A booster seat helps position the seat belt correctly over the child's body, providing better protection.
5. **Seat Belt Fit:** When transitioning to a seat belt, ensure that it fits properly. The lap belt should lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach, and the shoulder belt should cross the chest and shoulder, not the neck or face.
6. **Avoid Bulky Clothing:** Remove bulky clothing, such as winter coats, before securing a child in a car seat. Bulky clothing can compress in a crash, creating slack in the harness and reducing its effectiveness.



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WELCOME

WHAT'S next?

Five years ago, retirement wasn't even a thought in my wandering mind. Today, at age 55, it's becoming more of a reality. Not next week, next month, next year or likely even the next decade, but it's coming around the corner, sooner than I may realize.

I enjoy my job, and I like to work. Those are good things. At this point, it is difficult for me to imagine what I would do to fill my day if I wasn't working. I don't particularly enjoy traveling, I am not old enough to golf, and I would likely drive my wife crazy if I was around the house too much. I have a feeling many of you who are reading this can relate, in one way or another.

With the labor force in short supply, many opportunities abound for retired people who still want to work. Part time. Full time. Employee. Contractor. As a retired person in today's world, you can take your pick of jobs. In years past, this age group was highly desired among many employers, as those in it were quite often dependable and experienced. The COVID-19 scare changed this, as many retired folks who had come back to work opted to not do so any longer. This created a massive employment gap for many businesses that continues to exist today. Little by little, some seniors who are willing and able are coming back to the workforce. That's good news for everyone.

We have been fortunate in our business to have many folks who are past the traditional retirement age continue to contribute to our company. Some have written stories. Others have sold advertising. And many deliver publications for us. We are grateful and appreciative of the work those in the past have done and those currently continue to do. If I am blessed with good health and a sound mind in my later years, I hope to be able to do the same. And in a few decades, I might even take up golf. Maybe.

Thanks for reading. ■

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Golden EMPLOYEES

Retirement-age workers share why they continue to report for duty

By Lindsey Giardino

The vision of what life is like “after retirement” is as unique as each individual. For some, that vision focuses on leisure: traveling to warm beaches, afternoons spent reading, extra rounds of golf, more time for hobbies, friends and families. For others, however, employment continues to be an important aspect of their lives. From those who continue full-time careers to those who put in a few hours to keep busy, work can be a key part of life after retirement age.

Martha Sheldahl keeps busy in retirement with many activities including operating her small vintage shop in Polk City.

Couple finds purpose after retirement

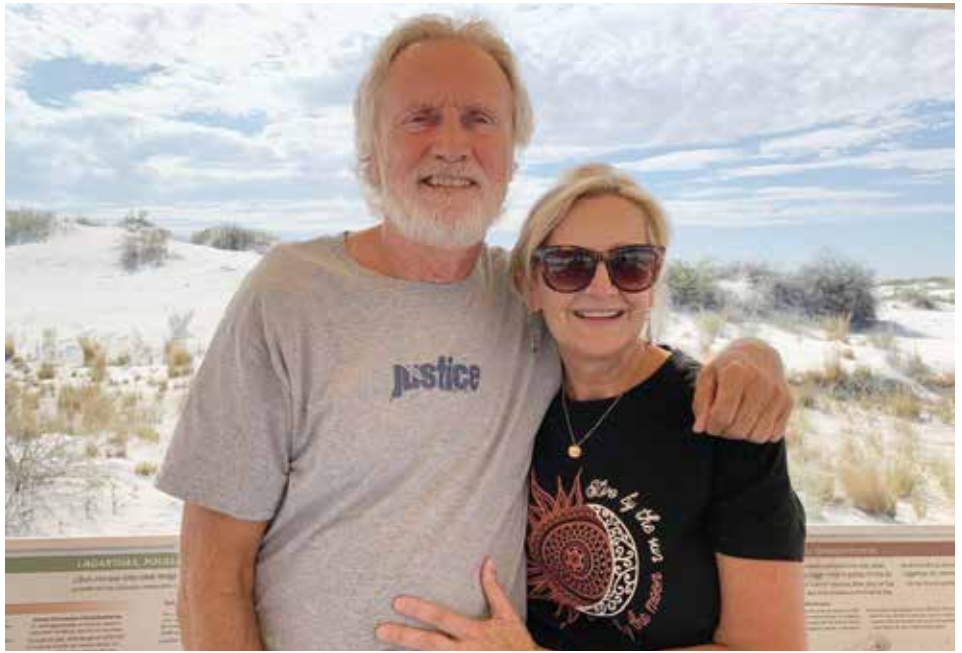
Mark and Kim Aarsvold have found joy in working after retirement.

Kim spent 27 years teaching, evolving from high school business/computer classes to middle school reading and language arts, developing a middle school reading intervention program and working as a reading specialist.

She first retired in 2019 and then again in 2021, after which she worked two long-term substitute teaching positions for 13 weeks.

During the 2022-23 school year, Kim worked part-time as a paraeducator in a fourth-grade general education classroom. She had planned to substitute teach and work as a para again this year, but her volunteer work — something she greatly enjoys — has taken up more time than expected.

“I choose to continue working and volunteering because there are needs that I am still able to help with and make a little bit of a difference,” Kim says. “My working and retirement journey have been, and continue to be, all about the blessing of serving and helping to make the world a little bit better. I



Mark and Kim Aarsvold say that working and volunteering during retirement help them feel a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

feel most fulfilled when I know that I can make someone’s life easier.”

Kim adds that her parents were hard-working small business owners, and their work

was a big part of their family life.

“To have good work is a blessing, and the rewards go beyond financial,” Kim says. “Work rewards you physically, mentally and

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emotionally. Since moving to Polk City a few years ago, work has helped me to connect to the city and surrounding area.”

Her husband Mark, also remains active in his retirement. Similar to his wife, Mark taught in public schools in Iowa and Minnesota for a total of 40 years, primarily at the fifth-grade level. He also coached eighth-grade girls volleyball and boys basketball throughout his career.

Since retiring in June 2017, Mark has worked in a few different capacities, all of which have been part-time. He reported and wrote columns for a tri-county newspaper while still living in Minnesota, helps with the harvest season each fall for a farmer friend and works two custodial shifts a week at the nearby rest area on Interstate 35.

“I enjoy making my own work schedule in retirement, which includes time for a few extra cups of coffee each morning,” Mark says. “I’ve also been able to maintain current and past friendships and make some new ones along the way.”

Mark is a people person, so continuing to work enables him to get his “people fix.”

Enjoying his extra earnings, which pay for bucket list activities, doesn’t hurt, either.

“I believe purpose is important for healthy retirement,” Mark says. “Whether I’m doing volunteer work or earning some income, I just feel better having a direction some days ... emphasis on some days.”

Finding what’s next

A few years after graduating high school in the early 1980s, Renee Blodgett joined the Iowa Army National Guard. After basic training and advanced individual training, Blodgett started working a temporary fulltime job at Camp Dodge.

She later became active duty in the Guard and Reserve, which provided the same benefits as if she were active duty in the army, but, instead of potentially being stationed overseas, she would stay in Iowa. Blodgett progressed through the ranks and positions, retiring as a sergeant major on Jan. 31, 2010.

“I loved being a part of the military, but I also knew, after 25 years, it was time to retire,” she shares.

Because Blodgett was only 46 when she

retired with full benefits, she knew it was likely she wouldn’t stay fully retired.

She was offered a job as a civilian contractor for the National Guard Bureau while she was still in uniform and worked in that capacity until March 2014.

“It was a great transition job, allowing me to use the skills and knowledge I gained in the military until I decided what I wanted to do completely outside of the military environment,” she says.

In 2014, Blodgett enrolled at DMACC to study digital marketing. A couple of years later, she received her digital marketing certificate to go along with the bachelor’s degree she earned from Grand View University.

“I knew that computer programs, social media, etc., would be key to whatever endeavor I took next,” she says.

That “next” came in the fall of 2018, when Blodgett became a Mary Kay independent sales director.

“I knew this was perfect for me going forward because it allowed me so much flexibility, not only in my hours, but also in location,” she says. “I didn’t want to work a



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FEATURE

job that required me to be at my desk a certain number of hours, have to ask permission to take time off work when we had medical issues or wanted to take an extended vacation. My husband was still working, so having one of us with a flexible schedule also made it easier to manage appointments and activities for our household. I had a few inquiries to see if I was interested in different positions, but I just couldn't bring myself to go back into that environment. Even through COVID, this has been a great fit for me."

Blodgett especially enjoys working with her customers and women in her Mary Kay unit.

"It fills my cup to see the smile on the faces of my customers when they try something new," she says. "I want to help them feel their most beautiful self, inside and out. I recently had a husband text me after his wife passed away. He said, 'I never saw anyone get as much pleasure as she did from applying her Mary Kay face creams.'"

In addition, Blodgett enjoys mentoring other women who choose to become Mary Kay independent beauty consultants.

"It's fun to watch them grow their self-confidence and skills," she says. "It's also a wonderful feeling to watch them set and meet goals, earn prizes and walk across our seminar stage at the end of the year, celebrating everything they accomplished."

For Blodgett, "When you find something you really love to do, you don't want to quit.

"That's how I feel about my current position as an independent sales director," she says. "I am no one's boss. I get to mentor women to become their best self, help them define what success is for them and go on that



After retirement, Renee Blodgett worked different jobs and now is a Mary Kay independent sales director, a position that gives her the flexibility to vacation with her husband when his schedule allows.

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journey with them. All of that on my own schedule. As long as I can continue to make a positive impact for women, I will. Plus, I promised my customers I would never quit on them.”

Joy comes from being around others

Coleen Deets retired from Sysco Foods of Iowa in December 2021 after 25 years as a sales coordinator in its credit/finance department.

After retiring, she sat at home for three months and quickly became antsy to do something different.

So, she applied for and took a role with North Polk Middle School’s nutrition department, serving lunch to students. Deets’ job there is only about 13 hours a week during the school year, so it’s an ideal time commitment for her. But when that first summer rolled around and there were no students to serve, boredom set in again.

“Then school was out, and I stayed home for a month and was bored, so I took a job at

Kwik Star giving out samples,” Deets says. “I enjoy getting out of the house and talking to people.”

She also jokes that, “People really like you when you’re handing out free food.”

Her favorite part of working at the middle school is interacting with the students.

“I grew up here and graduated from North Polk, so I know a lot of the kids through my kids and grandkids,” Deets says.

When school is in session, she cuts back to 10 hours a week at Kwik Star but enjoys how both jobs get her out and about.

“Working during retirement is not something I need to do, but I like being busy and interacting with people,” she says.

Substitute teaching and antiquing

Martha Sheldahl’s teaching career began in the early 1970s at North Polk’s Sheldahl elementary school, where she taught first and second grade.

Shortly after starting, she took a 10-year break to raise her two older children. After

her third child was born, she went back to teaching part-time at West Elementary at the pre-kindergarten level. She then moved to Central Elementary, where she taught kindergarten through second graders until her retirement in 2013.

After retiring, she began substitute teaching for the North Polk Community School District, which she still does today. Sheldahl also worked part-time at an antique store in Slater, which she shared with family.

“After leaving the store, I opened a small vintage shop in Polk City called Pedal Pushers, which I have open one to two days a week,” she shares. “My vintage shop gives me a place to play, create and paint furniture.”

But that isn’t all. Sheldahl also makes time for having a booth at the Brass Armadillo Antique Mall in Des Moines, for spending time with her grandchildren and for one of her favorite hobbies.

“Flower gardening at home is my stress reliever,” she says. “I like to stay busy and hope to continue these activities as long as I can,” she says. ■

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POLK CITY Community Library news

Adult Crafternoon: Bunny Butt Flowerpots

Tuesday, March 5, 2 p.m.

Join us for a fun afternoon of crafting. Make an adorable flowerpot that contains an unexpected visitor. All supplies will be provided. Ages 17 and older, registration required.

Polk City Community Library

1500 W. Broadway St., Polk City

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www.polkcitylibrary.org



Wednesday Book Club

“The Woman in Me” by Britney Spears, Wednesday, March 6, 7

p.m. In June 2021, the whole world was listening to Britney Spears speak in open court. The impact of sharing her voice — her truth — was undeniable, and it changed the course of her life and the lives of countless others.

Babble and Brew

Thursday, March 7, 10 a.m.

Longing for grown-up conversation? We will have coffee for you and exciting, age-appropriate toys for the kiddos.

Family Bingo

Monday, March 11, from 2-3 p.m.

Who doesn't love bingo or winning prizes? Registration is required.

Drop-In Craft,

Tuesday, March 12, 2-4 p.m.

Drop in and work on a craft with your family. We will set up the craft and the supplies, and you just need to bring your creativity. Parents and guardians are required to stay with their children.

Coloring Night at Fenders Brewing

Wednesday March 13, 4-9 p.m.

Drop in any time. Come for a night of relaxation and fun with friends at Fenders Brewing.

Kids Movie

Wednesday, March 13, 2-4 p.m.

Come enjoy a movie and some yummy popcorn at the library. Parents and guardians are required to stay with their children.

Music and Movement

Thursday, March 14, 10 a.m.

Come shimmy and shake with your child. Dance and sing while building pre-reading skills with rhythm and rhyme.

Adult DIY: Fairy Lanterns

Thursday, March 14, 6 p.m.

Come craft with us. We'll be making sparkly, decorative lanterns that might just be lit by the fae. Ages 17 and older, registration required.

Teen D.I.Y. Diamond Painting

Thursday, March 14, 2-3 p.m.

Middle school and high school students will enjoy diamond painting keychains and/or stickers. Diamond painting is similar to paint by numbers except you are working with tiny rhinestones that stick to the canvas or particular item you are painting. Registration is required.

K-5th STEM Book Club

Tuesday, March 19, 4-4:45 p.m.

We will be exploring the use of colors and how they fit into the scientific world. Pick up your free book, “Uni the Unicorn, Let's Clean Up the Forest” by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, before the book club meeting or you can pick it up on the day of the meeting and hear it read then. Register online.

Messy Munchkins

Thursday, March 21, 10 a.m.

Does your toddler or preschooler always make a mess? It is actually a great way for them to learn. Visit us and let your child explore sensory tables we will put out. Have your child wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty.

Monday Book Club

“James Herriot's Cat Stories” by James Herriot, Monday, March 18, 2 p.m.

Some of the Yorkshire vet's favorite tales about one of his favorite animals — each memoir as memorable and heartwarming as the last.

Adult Coloring

Tuesday, March 19, 5-7 p.m.

Join us for a relaxing evening of coloring. Colored pencils and gel pens will be provided. You are also welcome to bring your own. Ages 17 and older.

Rosie the Riveter with Linda McCann

Wednesday, March 20, 6 p.m.

This Women's History month, join the Polk City Library and Linda McCann to discuss Iowa's “Rosies,” the women who went to work as part of their civic duty during World War II. Linda was able to speak with 35 Iowa women who had worked as Rosies and will share their experiences.

LIBRARY

Adult DIY Card Crafting

Monday, March 25 at 6 p.m.

Join Jane and Kim in making handmade cards that are fun to create and are treasured by the recipients. There will be a \$5 material fee payable that night. Beginners are welcome. Feel free to bring scissors and adhesive if you have them and prepare to have a good time. Ages 17 and older. Register online at polkcitylibrary.org one month in advance.

Iowa's Lost History from the Titanic with Darcy Maulsby Thursday, March 28, 6 p.m.

What do an orphan train rider, a kidnapper, a missionary, a wealthy businessman, a wedding guest, a betrayed wife, a farmer and an immigrant recruiter have in common? All had ties to Iowa, and all were passengers aboard the ill-fated Titanic on the fateful night of April 15, 1912, when the famous ocean liner sank. Come listen to Iowa storyteller Darcy Maulsby discuss Iowa's connections to one of the most famous ships in history.

Story Time Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

Join us at the library for stories, songs and an activity or craft. Choose the day that works best for you. Register online at our website for one of the programs each week. Every story can be logged in our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, too.

Chair Yoga, Mondays, 9 a.m.

Join Rachel Snyder via Zoom. We will be broadcasting the class on the big screen in the library or you can join us from home. Chair yoga is a gentle practice in which postures are performed while seated and/or with the support of a chair. No experience is necessary. *Gentle strength training may also be incorporated into the practice. Props such as hand weights, resistance bands and a yoga block may be helpful if desired, but not necessary. The Zoom link can be found on our online catalog at polkcitylibrary.org.

Geri-Fit® Strength Training Workouts, Tuesdays at 9 a.m.

Strength Training workouts that work for all ages and fitness levels, Geri-Fit is challenging, effective and safe to do. The Geri-Fit® program requires a set of light dumbbell weights, a sturdy chair and water to drink during the workout. Ages 50 and older. Stretch bands are available upon request. If you would like to participate from home via Zoom, please let the library know ahead of time so we can email you the link.

Ladies' Wednesday Coffee. Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to noon.

Ladies, join us for coffee and conversation.

Sit N' Stitch. Thursdays, 6-8 p.m.

Bring your current project and join us for stitching and conversation.

Men's Friday Coffee. Fridays, 10 a.m. to noon.

Gentlemen, drop in for coffee and conversation. Enjoy spending time and having a few laughs or interesting discussions with other men from around the area. ■

Join Us

**Fish Fry's start Friday, February 16
5:30-7pm in the gym. Free Will Offering**



Stations of the Cross start at 5pm on Fridays during Lent with Mass to follow at 5:30pm

Evening Prayer at 4:30pm Sundays during Lent

Adoration/Benediction 2/20, 3/19, 4/16, 5/21 at 6pm

Palm Sunday Masses Saturday at 5pm, Sunday at 9am and 5pm

Holy Thursday March 28 Mass @ 7pm

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament March 28 from 8-10pm, March 29 from 6am-7pm and March 30 from 6am-7:30pm

Good Friday Stations of the Cross at 3pm

Good Friday Service March 29 @ 7pm

Easter Vigil March 30 @ 8pm

Easter Sunday Masses March 31 at 8am and 10am

Save the Date of April 13th for a Chili/Cinnamon Roll Cook-off with Chili Supper

1st Eucharist for our 2nd Graders April 21 at 1pm

Confirmation with Bishop Joensen April 24 at 7pm

MASS TIMES: Monday-Friday: 8am *During Lent, Mass on Fridays start at 5:30pm*
Saturday: 5pm | Sunday: 9am & 5pm

RECONCILIATION: Saturdays at 4pm | **Rosary:** Tuesdays at 8:30pm



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Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2024 Ankeny and Northern Polk County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish April issues of Ankeny and North Polk magazines. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

HURRY! POLL CLOSES MARCH 1, 2024.

See rules and vote at www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll. One vote per resident, please.

SCAN HERE TO
VOTE TODAY!



FOOD AND DRINK

- Restaurant
- Restaurant for Breakfast
- Restaurant for Lunch
- Restaurant for Dinner
- Restaurant for Dessert
- Place for Ice Cream
- Pizza Establishment
- Bar
- Coffee Shop
- Server/Bartender

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- Nonprofit
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce
- Library
- Camping Spot
- Coach
- Teacher

SHOPPING

- Grocery Store
- Boutique
- Retail Store
- Thrift Store
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman
- Florist

ENTERTAINMENT

- Dad/Child Date Spot
- Mom/Child Date Spot
- Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
- Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
- Place for Child's Birthday Party
- Golf Course

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Hair Salon
- Physicians Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Chiropractic Office
- Audiologist/Hearing Clinic
- Vision Care
- Health Club or Gym
- CBD Store

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Pharmacy
- Cosmetic Service
- Physical Therapy
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics/Tumbling Studio

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Financial Planner
- Law Firm
- Accounting Firm
- Veterinarian
- Lawn Care Business
- Landscaping Company
- Heating and Cooling Business
- Electrical Business
- Plumbing Company
- Senior Living Establishment
- Insurance Agency
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Photographer
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Home Builder/Remodeling
- Pest Control
- Cleaning Company
- Painting Company

POLK CITY Kiwanis Seniors of the Month

The Kiwanis Club of Polk City has named the Kiwanis Seniors of the Month.

Aaron Michalek

"My name is Aaron Michalek. I am the son of Ryan and Lori Michalek of Polk City. My sister, Jessica, is a fourth grader at Big Creek Elementary School. My favorite school subjects are math and Spanish. Throughout my four years of high school, I have been involved in football all four years, participated in track freshman and sophomore year, and participated in soccer junior year. I have also been involved in lacrosse, playing for Ankeny Thunder Lacrosse Club. I have been on the Gold honor roll all four years of high school. I am currently undecided on college and major, but I'd like to attend a four-year university and major in some type of engineering."



Josie Moore

"My name is Josie Moore, and I am a senior at North Polk High School. I have three older siblings and a nephew. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my nephew, reading, shopping, traveling, coloring and writing in calligraphy. At school, I participate in every band that is offered through my school. I play the flute, piccolo, alto sax and clarinet. I enjoy going to school and seeing my friends every day. School is important to me, so I work very hard and push myself to achieve the best grades that I can. I was on the Silver honor roll my freshman year. I was on the Gold honor roll my sophomore and junior years. I have also been on the Dean's list at DMACC. Last school year, I was awarded an Outstanding Spirit Award in band for the 2022-23 school year. I am also part of a group called Leadership Team through the band program. In this group, I am a section leader for the flute section. I enjoy being in leadership team because it allows me to grow as a leader and share my ideas with my peers. When I graduate from North Polk, I plan to attend Iowa State, majoring in marketing. I don't know exactly what I want to do when I am older, but I know that the business route is an education that can be versatile for any career path."



Josie is the daughter of Martha Brady and Dean Moore. Her favorite school subjects are chemistry and English. She works at two jobs and participates in youth group.

Kylie Rasmussen

"Hello! I am Kylie Rasmussen, a senior at North Polk High School. I have two younger sisters, Jaslyn, 14, and Harper, 10, and we live near Cambridge with my parents, Noah and Rachel. Through my four years at North Polk, I have been involved in many activities including volleyball, basketball, track, softball, choir, show choir, Key Club, FCA, National Honor Society and National Spanish Honor Society. This past year, I was awarded Second Team All-Conference for volleyball and have been recognized on the Gold honor roll for the past three years of high school. I have also been blessed to have run at the Drake Relays and medal at the State Track Meet throughout high school. Outside of school, sports and other activities, I have dedicated time to helping out the community through various volunteer opportunities and helping out my local church in Elkhart. After high school, I plan to continue my education at Iowa State University and study chemical engineering. I am very excited for the future years to come. Roll, 'Clones!' ■



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A BETTER-FOR-YOU breakfast favorite

(Family Features) Whether you're encouraging loved ones to start a new wellness kick or looking to add new ideas to an already-nutritious menu, families at any stage of a journey toward better health can use newfound favorites to bring fresh flavors to the table.

Start by ramping up your family's breakfast with these slightly sweet mini Greek yogurt pancakes with cinnamon-maple topping for a protein-packed way to start the day with a healthy addition of fresh berries. This dish from Milk Means More provides a delicious breakfast that allows you to bring everyone together for a tasty, nutritious meal no matter the occasion. Dairy foods, like the low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt found in this recipe, are fundamental to good nutrition.

Constructing a better-for-you menu calls for a balanced diet with a variety of foods to get essential nutrients. This balance is important for maintaining healthy gut and immune function while optimizing overall wellness.

Find additional better-for-you recipe inspiration at MilkMeansMore.org. ■

Mini Greek yogurt pancakes with cinnamon-maple topping

Recipe courtesy of Marcia Stanley, MS, RDN, culinary dietitian, on behalf of Milk Means More
Total time: 25 minutes
Servings: 6

Topping:

- 1 3/4 cups plain Greek yogurt (fat free, 2% or 5%)
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pancakes:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 3/4 cup plain Greek yogurt (fat free, 2% or 5%)
- 1/2 cup milk (skim, 2% or whole)
- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- oil
- 1 cup fresh blueberries or chopped fresh strawberries

To make topping:

Stir yogurt, syrup and cinnamon. Cover and refrigerate.

To make pancakes:

In mixing bowl, stir flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In separate bowl, whisk egg, yogurt, milk, butter and vanilla. Add yogurt mixture to flour mixture. Stir just until combined (batter should be slightly lumpy).

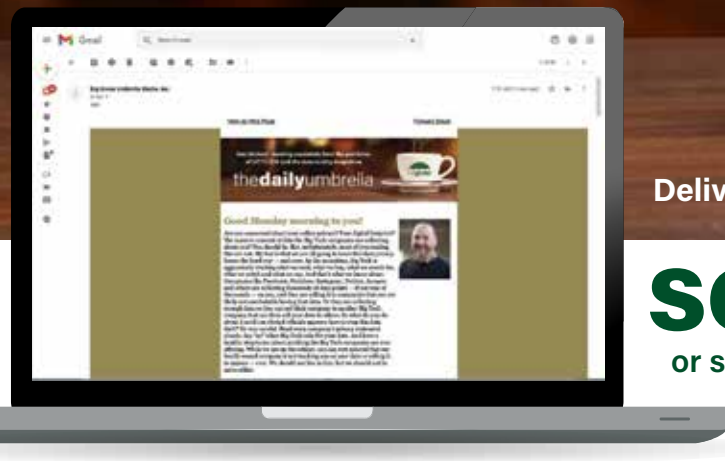
- Scrape batter into large plastic food storage bag. Oil nonstick griddle or large nonstick skillet. Heat over medium heat. Cut off about 1/2 inch from corner of plastic bag. Squeeze batter, about 1 tablespoon at a time, onto hot griddle. Cook 1-2 minutes per side, or until pancakes are golden brown, turning to second sides when bubbles form on surface of pancakes and edges are slightly dry.
- Serve warm pancakes topped with cinnamon-maple yogurt and sprinkled with berries.



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THE COMETS CORNER

NEWS FROM NORTH POLK CSD

FEBRUARY 2024

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS



The district is actively seeking sponsors among local businesses, vendors, companies, and individuals in the community and surrounding metro area to provide crucial support for various projects aimed at enhancing facilities within the district for the 2024-2025 school year. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about this initiative or becoming a sponsor to contribute towards these projects, please contact our district's superintendent, Michael Kline. Your sponsorship can make a meaningful impact on our ongoing efforts to improve and upgrade our facilities.

We are offering several sponsorship options, including:

- **Package A:** Stadium Windscreen Sponsorship
- **Package B:** Tennis Windscreen Sponsorship
- **Package C:** Softball Fence Banner Sponsorship
- **Package D:** Streaming Sponsorship at \$700/night.

Additionally, there are several other long-term opportunities to explore.

HIRING SEASON



As we enter the education hiring season, we want to inform you of a recent update: the state has shifted its educational hiring platform from "Teach Iowa" to the new "IowaWorks." If you are aware of potential candidates for positions within our district, please encourage them to apply.

The transition to IowaWorks has led to some challenges for job seekers in locating postings. If you know of individuals facing difficulties in finding the appropriate links, kindly advise them to reach out to the district office for assistance.

We currently have openings for various positions, including:

- High School Spanish
- High School Math
- High School Special Education
- Middle School Math
- Middle School Band
- Middle School Literacy
- Middle School Special Education (Strat II preferred)
- 5th Grade at Big Creek Elementary
- 4th Grade at Central Elementary

Your support in spreading the word about these opportunities is greatly appreciated!

NEW YEAR. NEW LOOK.

North Polk's commitment to innovation is showcased in our redesigned website, created in collaboration with Finalsity. This updated platform reinforces our dedication to improving communication with families and all stakeholders.

The revamped website offers a streamlined, user-friendly experience with key features such as an interactive calendar, quick links for easy resource access, safety reporting, enrollment options, and seamless mobile integration.

Explore our online home, utilize the search feature for assistance, and feel free to reach out at webmaster@northpolk.org if you need further support. We're here to help!



A PASSION for native plants

Polk City Friends of the Park is on a mission.

The Polk City Friends of the Parks' mission is to make Polk City a place everyone can enjoy.

Board member Tanya Harrington is one of those people on the front line of making — and keeping — the city's spaces beautiful. The group has done yeoman work, helping provide a shade structure in Leonard Park, fund the Pocket Park off the square, provide a bike rack for Lost Lake Park, fund Trees for Kids at West Elementary, and develop a new pollinator garden in Lost Lake Park, among other things. Current projects include a skating rink at Kiwanis Park, connecting bike trails and the resurfacing of the tennis courts at Miller Park.

The board's long list of accomplishments is helped greatly by the diversified expertise within.

"What makes our group special is that each board member adds a different perspective when we are making our goals," Harrington says. "I am focused on adding native plants, another board member is focused on bike trails, another member wants to see more recreational opportunities for teenagers."

Harrington's passion for native plants began, ironically, with cats.

"I thought it would be fun for them to watch birds outside, and in my quest to attract birds, I provided water, cover and birdseed," she says. "It was only after reading Doug Tallamy's book, 'Nature's Best Hope,' that I found out that the birds will show up if you provide the main food source for their young — caterpillars."

In the summer of 2022, Harrington learned that the monarch butterfly had been placed on the endangered species list by some organizations. Having grown up with her mom teaching her about the butterflies and moths of Iowa and their relationship with native plants, she felt compelled to do something knowing the cause of their decline was in part due to the loss of milkweed, the only plant monarch butterfly can eat as caterpillars.

Harrington posted something on Facebook to seek volunteers for the project and met Jessica Faue, president of Friends of the Parks. And, soon, the West elementary pollinator project was born. With the help of the Friends of the Parks group, Harrington was able to obtain a grant for six native trees, which support more than 500 species of butterflies and moths. She even added a large pollinator garden and two smaller ones. By the following fall, the garden was filled with butterflies. Shortly thereafter, Harrington joined the Friends of the Parks board with the goal of adding as many native plants to parks and bike trails as possible.

Polk City is in the unique position to be surrounded by an abundance of nature, Harrington says. But that nature is, for the most part, outside of town or at least a walk or a bike ride away. But nature shouldn't be something you go "visit," she says.

"Kids and adults should have nature when they step out their backdoor," Harrington says. "When you envision your yard in the summer, do you see red, yellow, purple and green or is it all just green?"

Historically, Iowa hasn't been an all-green monoculture, she says. The animals, birds and insects are all still here, but the plants they rely on have all but vanished.

"If we don't make the choice to put natives in our yards, our kids will miss out on the amazing things our world has to offer," Harrington says. "Not just as kids, but possibly forever. The time to act is now. Nature —



Tanya Harrington has a passion for native plants and leads efforts to plant them. She is especially passionate about planting pollinators around the parks to support butterflies.

and the Monarch in particular — can't wait."

Harrington says she is hoping the group will be able to add some pollinator patches to the parks that show the community that native plants don't automatically mean an "out of control mess."

"It's all about the types of natives you plant," she says. "If you plant native prairie grasses or black eyed Susan for erosion control, then you will have a patch that will be tall and look more like a prairie. But there are many, many options from 8 inches to 8 feet. Your native gardens can look planned out and well maintained if that is your preference."

Also in future works are a seed library for people to take and donate native seeds, Harrington adds, as well as adding a couple of rain gardens to the parks that have problems with standing water.

Thus far, citizens have been receptive and supportive, Harrington says.

"The residents of Polk City have been incredibly generous to Friends of the Parks," she says. "When we set goals for our parks, we are able to achieve them." ■

GIRLS wrestling debut

Middle schoolers “blazing a trail”



The North Polk middle school girls wrestling team is “blazing a trail” as the wrestling program looks to grow enough for the district to have its own high school team.

The North Polk Middle School girls wrestling team made its debut in January 2024, coached by Chris Silver. Silver also coaches middle school boys wrestling, which began before winter break. He says the programs are the same for both girls and boys. The style of wrestling and rules follow high school’s “folkstyle” wrestling.

However, he says his approach to coaching girls versus boys is slightly different since most of the girls haven’t wrestled before.

“Some girls are trying it new and others have a connection in wrestling. Some watched their brothers wrestle or their dad was a wrestler,” he says.

“We work hard to push them. Yet, we also want to be uplifting and encouraging and focusing on being positive. At the end of the practice, we talk about what went well, and they share good things.”

When coaching a first-time sport for girls, it’s important to review the basics.

“Many have never stepped on a mat. It’s important to break it all down and teach the techniques.”

A few years ago, the elementary school began offering an introductory girls wrestling program. North Polk is hoping to build a high school program in the future. Currently, several girls from North Polk High School have a co-op agreement to participate with the Ankeny High School girls wrestling team.

Silver, a North Polk graduate, wrestled in high school. He began coaching in high school and says his North Polk coaches, Bill Taylor, Jerry Walker and Dave Middleton, were influential and supportive coaches — and inspired his decision to coach.

For 27 years, he’s also coached football and baseball. He likes how he can give back to the community he was raised in.

“After I returned from college, I wanted to give back. I absolutely loved the coaches,” he reflects. “To see the passion these coaches put into the kids influences my coaching,” he says.

Silver says it’s exciting to see the new program take off, not just in sports but in the athletes’ lives.

“We try to teach lessons off the mat, including integrity and service before self. We want excellence in the class and at home, not just on the mat.”

He’s witnessed camaraderie and enthusiasm among the girls.

“It takes a lot of courage. They are blazing a trail. It’s not easy. I admire their dedication to starting something new,” he says. ■



Chris Silver coaches the North Polk girls and boys middle school wrestling teams.

GET LOST — in a daydream

“How will you go about finding that thing the nature of which is totally unknown to you?” — Meno.

This may seem like a philosophical question, but it appears just as important for every individual to answer today as when it was first said in ancient Greece. Wishing others to “get lost” could be well intentioned, because getting lost can cause what was unfamiliar to appear. “Lost” comes from the Old Norse “los,” and one translation is “falling out of formation.” This implies it’s an action rather than a state of being.

Good news is you can access the expansive blue from anywhere thanks to the power of your mind. Daydreaming stimulates creative innovation in the brain’s right hemisphere but also activates the hippocampus, which suggests this could help improve learning and memory. Somewhat paradoxically, daydreaming about recent events helps cement them into memory, so the wandering mind is perhaps never lost. If daydreaming sounds lazy, call it “quiet wakefulness,” which is a relaxed state of environmental awareness that helps us process things when we are both awake and at rest. Without it, we may never have heard of Einstein. It’s up to you to find what “flow state” helps spontaneous connections in your brain. It’s clear from MRI scans that your brain is very active during daydreaming, but how active is it at other times? ■



Information provided by Lance Andersen, LMSW, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd., 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com, andersen@sstherapyandconsulting.com.

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NEWS BRIEF

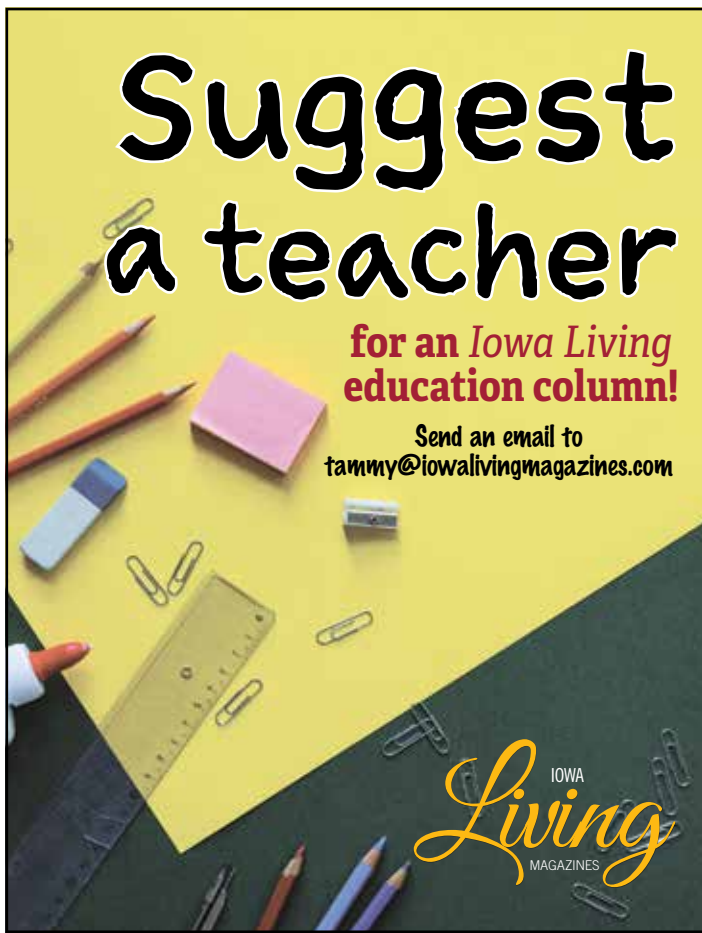
HOME STATE BANK opens Polk City branch

Home State Bank in Jefferson announced the opening of its new location in Polk City. Since the groundbreaking ceremony on Oct. 27, 2022, Home State Bank and construction crews have been tirelessly working to finish their newest full-service location, which will also include various office suite rentals for local businesses. This full-service location has replaced their temporary Ankeny location, giving current local customers their full suite of products and services, allowing for more growth for new customers.

"Over the last decade, we have been growing and expanding our relationships in the Polk County area. Polk City is a community that so many people call home and is a great opportunity for Home State Bank to be part of and serve," said Bob Allen, bank president.

"Since 1934, Home State Bank has been a staple for community banking in Greene County. We are excited to expand into Polk City and bring our community banking experience to the market. We look forward to growing with and supporting Polk City and the North Polk School District," said Eric Hockenberry, market president.

Home State Bank officially opened its doors on Monday, Jan. 22, and will be holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, Feb. 22, at 4 p.m. at the new location at 101 E. Bridge St. in Polk City. ■



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Investing for your future is important — but it can be challenging. How can you navigate the complexities of the financial markets and make the right decisions for your situation?

Fortunately, you don't have to go it alone. A financial advisor can help you in these key areas:

- **Developing a personal financial strategy** – Many factors go into creating a long-term financial strategy. What is your risk tolerance? When would you like to retire? What sort of retirement lifestyle have you envisioned? What are your other important goals? A financial advisor will ask these and other questions in getting to know you, your family situation and your hopes for the future. By taking this type of holistic approach, a financial advisor can help you create financial and investment strategies appropriate for your needs.


- **Avoiding mistakes** – A financial advisor can help you avoid costly investment mistakes. One such mistake is attempting to “time” the market. Investors pursue market timing when they try to “buy low” and “sell high.” In theory, of course, this is a great idea — if you could consistently buy investments — stocks, in particular — when their price is down and then sell them when the price has risen significantly, you'd always make some tidy profits. The main drawback to this technique, though, is that it's virtually impossible to follow, especially for individual investors. Nobody, not even professional money managers, can really predict with any accuracy when stock prices have reached high or low points. Consequently, those who try to make these guesses could miss out on opportunities. For example, investors who are determined to buy low might not want to purchase investments when the market is up — but this practice could lead to taking a “time out” from investing just when the market is in the midst of a rally. But a financial advisor can steer clients toward a more disciplined approach, such as buying quality investments and holding them for the long term, regardless of the ups and downs of the market.


- **Checking progress toward your goals** – If you were to invest without any guidance, you might not be looking at your investments' performance with the proper perspective. For example, some investors simply compare their portfolio returns against a widely used market index, such as the S&P 500. But this comparison may not be that useful. The S&P 500 only measures the stock prices of the leading publicly traded U.S. companies by market capitalization — but your investment portfolio, if properly diversified, will include investments other than U.S. stocks, such as bonds, government securities, international stocks and more. Consequently, the performance of your portfolio won't track that of the S&P 500 or any other single index, either. Your financial advisor can help you employ more meaningful benchmarks, such as whether your portfolio's progress is on track toward helping you meet your financial goals. Also, a financial advisor will review your portfolio and investment strategy regularly to determine what changes, if any, need to be made, either in response to the markets or to events in your life.

Investing for your future can be exciting and rewarding — and you can feel more confident in your decisions when you have someone helping you along the way. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC. Information was provided by Kyle Matzen, AAMS, 407 W Bridge Rd. Suite 7, Polk City, 515-984-6073.





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PICKLEBALL Moms fosters building connections

Group works with Friends of the Parks to improve, add courts.



Taylor Lehman started Polk City Pickleball Moms with the intention of fostering regular pickleball play and building connections with fellow moms in town.

Taylor Lehman launched Polk City Pickleball Moms with the intention of fostering regular pickleball play and building connections with fellow moms in town.

“Despite residing in Polk City for two years, our social circle was limited, given that we are not originally from Iowa,” Lehman explains. “After I started a Facebook group, we began organizing weekly play sessions at Miller Park every Sunday throughout the summer.”

Lehman and others quickly recognized the need for improved courts, so she proactively contacted Polk City Parks and Recreation, who connected her with Polk City Friends of the Parks — a volunteer-based, non-profit organization aimed at enhancing Polk City’s

parks, trails and greenspaces for the benefit of the entire community.

“Following a meeting, they expressed willingness to collaborate on fundraising endeavors for the construction of the new courts,” Lehman shares.

Now, the plan is to address safety concerns at the Miller Park tennis courts through resurfacing, bidding farewell to dead spots, cracks and slippery surfaces. There are also plans to add additional pickleball courts.

“Pickleball is a sport suitable for all ages and skill levels, promoting social interaction and physical activity,” Lehman says. “It may attract a diverse group of residents, fostering a sense of community and wellbeing. Additionally,

repurposing the courts can optimize space utilization and cater to a growing interest in pickleball, potentially enhancing overall park usage.”

On April 20, Polk City Friends of Parks will be hosting the group’s annual Earth Day 5K Run/Walk. A pickleball tournament will also be held that day. All funds will go toward resurfacing the courts at Miller Park.

The community can help by either participating in these events (more information can be found on the Polk City Friends of the Parks website, www.polkcityfriendsoftheparks.com), volunteering at the events, or simply donating to donorbox.org/general-donation-355. ■

EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Be sure to check for cancellations.



Earth Day Family 5K Run/Walk and Pickleball Tournament

Saturday, April 20

Funds raised at the Polk City Friends of the Parks' annual Earth Day Family 5K Run/Walk and the Pickleball Tournament being held in conjunction with it will go toward costs of resurfacing the tennis and pickleball courts at Miller Park. For information about the events, visit www.polkcityfriendsoftheparks.com/earth-day-5k.

Dome After Dark

Fridays, 6-10 p.m. through March

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Enjoy the conservatory and gardeners show house which will be illuminated with unique and colorful lighting. Details at dmbotanicalgarden.com



Class Act Productions

201 First Ave. S., Altoona
captheatre.org

- Feb. 16-18, 23-25, March 1-3: "The Music Man Jr."



Des Moines Performing Arts productions

Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons, Stoner Theater, Temple Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
dmpa.org

- Feb. 17: The Peking Acrobats
- Feb. 20: Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo
- Feb. 27 through March 3: "Les Misérables"
- Feb. 27 through March 17: "Dixie's Never Wear a Tube Top While Riding a Mechanical Bull"



Iowa Wolves home games

Wells Fargo Arena
233 Center St., Des Moines
iowa.gleague.nba.com

- Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. vs. Rio Grande Valley Vipers

Stephens Auditorium

1900 Center Drive, Ames
center.iastate.edu/events

- Feb. 29 through March 3: "Always Plenty of Light at the Starlight All Night Diner"



Des Moines Civic Center

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
dmpa.org

- Feb. 23-24: Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix™ in concert



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hoytsherman.org

- Feb. 23: Postmodern Jukebox at 8 p.m.
- Feb. 24: Marty Stuart and his Fabulous Superlatives at 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 29: Cat Power sings Dylan: The 1966 Royal Albert Hall concert at 7:30 p.m.

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Be sure to check for cancellations.



Iowa Wild home games

Wells Fargo Arena
233 Center St., Des Moines
iowawild.com

- Feb. 19 at 5 p.m. vs. Rockford
- Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. vs. Rockford

Judy Niemack jazz concert

Sunday, March 17, 2 p.m.

Caspe Terrace, 33158 Ute Ave., Waukee

Jazz critic Dan Morgenstern said it best — “If you want to know what real jazz singing can be (but rarely is), listen to Judy Niemack.” Niemack has perfected her beautiful voice, fearless improvisational skills, impressive musicianship and exceptional versatility for more than 40 years and on many critically-acclaimed recordings. She also enjoys a worldwide reputation as a jazz vocal teacher and author of several “must-have” vocal jazz improvisation books. Niemack will be accompanied by pianist John DiMartino, who appeared at Caspe Terrace several years ago with vocalist Jay Clayton. For more information and tickets, visit <https://jazzatcaspe.weebly.com/tickets.html>.



CITYVIEW Chocolate Walk

Friday, Feb. 23, 5-9 p.m.

West Glen Town Center, 5465 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines

Like chocolate? Like chocolate drinks? Then you'll love this event. For a ticket price of \$25 (\$35 at the door), attendees will receive 10 tickets that can be redeemed for sample cocktails at participating venues. Attendees will also be provided tickets for chocolate dessert samples at participating retail stores. A shuttle bus from Majestic Limousine will be providing transportation to each location, although most are only a short walk away. For a link to purchase tickets, visit chocolatwalk.dmcityview.com. ■

YMCA Red Flannel Run

Feb. 17 • 501 Grand Ave., Des Moines • Dmymca.org

The Red Flannel Run is great for a fun freezing run. After starting 35 years ago when two single guys didn't have Valentine's Day dates, it is credited with being the longest consecutively produced race in the Des Moines area.

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Susie Sheldahl Realty One Group held an open house on Jan. 26 at her Polk City office.



Tony Haisman and Steve Karsjen at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Mayra Worley and Susie Sheldahl at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Police Chief Jeremy Siepker and Fire Chief Karla Hogrefe at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Chelsea Huisman and Jessica Faue at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Jeremy Arends and Clayton Harreld at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Colin and Autumn Chrouser at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Jen Finn and Jamie Dobson at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Larry and Rob Cupp at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Brian Nelson and Staci Allen at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.



Chad Johnston and Jeff Savage at the Go Polk City lunch on Jan. 17 at Luana Savings Bank.

CLASSIFIEDS

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VARSITY basketball

The boys varsity basketball team played at North Polk High School on Feb. 6.



Emily Gibbons, Elinor Austin, Ava Ferguson-Sampson, Rebecca Greene, Meredith Whitted, Lola Austin and Jamie McKnight



Drew Owen



Graedan Sullivan



Bradyn Cory



Charlie Bunkers



Reggie Postel



Brady Schulz



Rocky Bartleman



Jake Hout

Getting ready for Spring break with the kids!

Kids Create offers tons of fun workshops all Spring Break long! See the classes by visiting app.iclasspro.com/portal/kidscreate/dashboard

MARCH 10TH

Soap Making: 2nd-5th

Axolotl Ceramic Figure: 1st-5th

MARCH 11TH & 12TH

Rainbow Rabbits: K-4th from 9am-3pm

Lego Robotics: 1st-3rd 4pm-6pm

MARCH 13TH

Pick Your Pottery: K-4th from 9am-3pm

MARCH 14TH

Rabbits & Realism: 3rd-6th from 9am-3pm

MARCH 15TH

Art Era: 1st-5th from 9am-3pm

MARCH 16TH

Pokémon on Pottery: 1st-5th from 9am-3pm

Pick Your Pottery & Pizza: K-5th



119 2nd St.
Polk City, IA 50226

Stuck in town and on the hunt for some kiddo-approved fun? Here are a few ideas to get your playful juices flowing!

MARCH 11TH & 12TH

Story Time at Polk City Community Library: Ages 0-5 from 10am-10:30am

1500 W. Broadway, Polk City, IA 50226

MARCH 12TH (7-9) MARCH 13TH (10-12)

Great Escape in Pleasant Hill: Bowling, laser tag, and arcade games from 12pm-4:30pm

655 NE 56th St, Pleasant Hill, IA 50327

ENJOY ONE OF POLK CITY'S 12 BEAUTIFUL PARKS:

Doc Simmer Memorial Park, Kiwanis Park, Leonard Park, Lost Lake Park, Marina Cove Park, Morse Family Park, Sports Complex, Town Square, and Twelve Oaks Park

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